
COINS

New move in the coin con game

By Roger Boye

For decades, con artists have swindled unwitting collectors by selling fake coins, supposed rarities with altered dates or added mint marks.

Now there's a new twist to the coin-shark

game: official-looking "authentication certificates" from the American Numismatic Association [ANA] that are, in reality, counterfeit.

Experts at the ANA's respected Certification Service study coins submitted by collectors. If the pros decide a coin is authentic, they send the owner a special "authentication certificate" that includes a picture of the coin.

A few weeks ago, the ANA learned that a man had paid hundreds of dollars for a presumed authentic 1916-D dime and the accompanying certificate. The 1916-D is a major rarity, suppos-

edly well worth the high price.

But the buyer later discovered that not only was the dime a phony [the "D" mint mark had been soldered to the coin], but that the certificate had been forged as well. Dealers quoted in Coin World have reported seeing other fake ANA certificates.

ANA executives urge prospective buyers of rare coins that have accompanying "authentication certificates" to examine both the coin and certificate with a 10-power magnifier, and to

make sure the coin matches the photo in the certificate.

In other words, the ANA says, it's "Buyer, beware," even if the coin for sale is accompanied by official-looking papers.

● A reminder: Today's the final session of the Chicago International Coin Fair at the Hyatt Regency Chicago Hotel, 151 E. Wacker Dr. Nearly 120 dealers from the United States and 10 other countries will buy and sell foreign coins from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free.